

**TESTIMONY OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND  
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
IN OPPOSITION TO L.D. 799**

**“RESOLVE TO ALLOW USE OF LIVE BAIT FOR FISHING IN THE  
ALLAGASH WILDERNESS WATERWAY AND FISH RIVER”**

**SPONSORED BY: Representative BROOKS of Winterport  
CO-SPONSORED BY: Senator TUTTLE of York  
Representative FARNSWORTH of Portland  
Representative GATTINE of Westbrook  
Representative VEROW of Brewer**

**DATE OF HEARING: April 9, 2013**

Good afternoon Senator Dutremble, Representative Shaw and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am John Boland, Director of the Bureau of Resource Management at the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in opposition to **L.D. 799**.

LD 799 directs the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to amend department rules to allow the use of live baitfish on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and the Fish River waterway. For the purpose of this testimony, we assume this resolve is directed at water bodies entirely within the boundaries of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, and the major water bodies comprising the Fish River Chain of Lakes. For the Allagash system these include Allagash Lake, Allagash Stream, Little Round Pond, Chamberlain and Telos Lakes, Big Eagle Lake, Churchill Lake, Heron Lake, Umsaskis Lake, Long Lake, Harvey Pond, Round Pond, and the Allagash River to Twin Brook Ledges. For the Fish River system, we assume the resolve is directed at Carr Pond, Fish River Lake, Round Pond, Portage Lake, St. Froid Lake, Eagle Lake, Long Lake, Cross Lake, Square Lake, and the entire Fish River, including the major thoroughfares connecting the larger lakes.

The great majority of the water bodies I've just listed currently have no live baitfish restrictions whatsoever. However, several waters in each of two systems are presently managed with restrictive terminal tackle regulations. The intent of these restrictions is to minimize the risk of unintentional fish introductions, and to help us meet certain population size or fish size objectives by minimizing hooking-related injuries and mortalities, particularly during the late-summer and fall seasons. Some

examples where terminal tackle restrictions are currently in place include Allagash Stream which were implemented in 1979 and extended to Chamberlain Lake 2005, Little Long Pond (2005), Allagash Lake (1979), the Allagash River below Umsaskis Lake (2012), and the Allagash River below Long Lake to Allagash Falls (2012). In addition, the lower reaches of most tributaries of the Allagash Waterway lakes have ALO restrictions during the late part of the open water season to protect migrating, spawning-age trout. These regulations were put into place during the late 1980's or early 1990's. Finally, certain segments of the Fish River, including the Thoroughfares connecting the large lakes, have had special terminal tackle restrictions during the late summer-early fall season for several decades.

The restrictions noted above have been in place for many years, are closely monitored by our Regional Biologists, and have proven to be effective in meeting management objectives on those waters. If the present rules are rescinded in accordance with this bill's language, then we could anticipate increased hooking mortality and increased risk of new fish introductions to many high-value fisheries. Fisheries management in these waters will be rolled back, in some instances, by several decades and our existing sport fisheries will suffer as a result. We are therefore opposed to LD 799.

I would be happy to answer any questions you have.